

EXHIBIT Z

Visa of Cornell University student fighting deportation is revoked by the State Department

By [Gloria Pazmino](#), CNN

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Momodou Taal speaks with CNN in November 2023. CNN

(CNN) — Attorneys for a Cornell graduate student whose student visa was recently revoked and has been targeted for deportation by the Trump administration said the case will be a test to determine whether the US government can target people for expressing views that are critical of the government.

Attorneys for Momodou Taal, a doctoral student at Cornell University – who filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration last week – spoke outside federal court in Syracuse, New York, following a hearing in the case Tuesday.

Taal is accusing the Trump administration of targeting him for his participation in pro-Palestinian protests amid the Israel-Hamas war. He was told to surrender to Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, according to a court filing made shortly after he asked a judge to preemptively order the government not to deport him.

The student had previously faced the possibility of losing his visa – after he was suspended twice by Cornell last year for alleged disruptive protest activities, and was told that his academic suspension could cause his visa to be revoked, forcing him to leave the United States.

Taal has also faced criticism for comments made online immediately after the Hamas October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, killing more than 1,200 people. Taal tweeted “colonised peoples have the right to resist by any means necessary” and “Glory to the resistance!”

He brushed off complaints about his statements in a November 2023 interview with CNN and said he was tired of constantly being asked to condemn Hamas.

“I think it’s quite racist, Islamophobic that before I’m allowed to have a view on genocide, I have to condemn a terrorist organization,” Taal said.

“I can say clearly categorically I abhor the killing of all civilians no matter where they are and who does it,” he added.

On Tuesday Taal’s attorney, Eric Lee, said of the federal case, “it doesn’t end with Momodou Taal, it starts with him, next it will be you.”

Taal did not attend the hearing, but two other plaintiffs from the lawsuit were present. Mukoma Wa Ngugi, an associate professor of literatures in English at Cornell, and Sriram Parasurama, a doctoral student, have both joined the suit.

“Momodou, my fellow plaintiff, could not be here to deliver his statement,” Ngugi said. “Is this the country we want to live in, where a plaintiff cannot attend his own legal proceedings? It is clear that the Trump administration has no respect for rule of law or due process.”

Taal’s legal action seeks an injunction to block the enforcement of two Trump executive orders which have served as the basis for the administration’s targeting of student protesters in recent weeks. The judge has not yet issued a decision on the motions, but Taal’s attorneys said they are confident the law is on their side.

“I wasn’t convinced by the government’s arguments in there,” Lee said. “But I wasn’t convinced by their arguments before either.”

CNN has reached out to the US Attorney’s Office in the Northern District of New York.

How we got here

Unlike other students who have received deportation orders or been targeted by immigration enforcement agents, Taal, who is a dual citizen of the United Kingdom and The Gambia, sought to preempt enforcement action by filing the lawsuit against the Trump administration.

Court documents filed by Department of Justice attorneys show the State Department revoked Taal's student visa, citing his participation in the protests, which they say created a hostile environment for students on campus. The documents show the visa was revoked on March 14.

In papers filed with the court, attorneys for the Department of Justice said the visa was revoked a day before Taal filed his lawsuit, countering Taal's claims that the immigration action was done in retaliation for his lawsuit.

"State relied upon the underlying information and assessment provided by ICE that Taal had been involved with disruptive protests and had engaged in an escalating pattern of behavior, disregarding university policies and creating a hostile environment for Jewish students," the lawyers wrote.

Attorneys for the Department of Justice are contesting Taal's alleged timeline of the facts, after his lawyers said undercover immigration officers showed up at his residence last week in retaliation for filing the lawsuit.

Taal is one of the activists flagged for suggested deportation by Betar US, a self-described Zionist advocacy group and the only Jewish organization classified as an extremist group by the Anti-Defamation League.

CNN's Andy Rose and Michelle Watson contributed to this report.

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